

John Mach Nhial

Age: 27

Region Upper Nile

When you're born in the war you should know what's going on. Parents should teach children what is going, who is a good person, and who is not. The Arab military shot people in the villages so I ran to the bush.

I walked until I got to Ethiopia. I felt at home in Ethiopia because we used to take care of one another. I was in Panyido from 1987 to 1991. The educational facilities weren't very good. I didn't have books, pens, or pencils. I used charcoal from burned trees and wrote on cardboard. When I left Ethiopia to get back to Sudan, I jumped into the Gilo River. Some people were eaten by the crocodiles or drowned. I traveled through Pochala, Pakot, Boma, Magos, Kapoeta, Narus, Lockichokio, and eventually came to Kakuma.

School was better in Kakuma. I studied building engineering in a technical school. I passed my National Exam and received a Certificate.

I came to Arizona at midnight on May 29, 2001. About thirty American people welcomed me at the airport. American people are friendly to everyone. Living in America is better because when you live in a refugee camp, you have difficulties.

I have worked as a security guard for four years. I've worked at the airport, hospital, and Circle K. I want to study engineering or architecture, but due to financial problems, I can't get an education right now. I went to High Tech Institute for a while but I had to drop out. I have no one to sponsor me. My mother lives in Sudan, near the border of Uganda. I haven't talked to my mom since I came to the U.S. My dad was killed.

If you are a non-educated person you can't get a job. I want to save money so that I can go to school.